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Wisbech Rural District Council.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for 1937.

To the Chairman and Members of the Rural District Council of Wisbech.

GENTLEMEN,

I have again the honour of presenting my Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary condition of the Rural District of Wisbech for the year 1937.

The Area consists of eight Parishes situated in the Isle of Ely, lying towards the north, west and south of Wisbech. It has the usual characteristics of the Fen Country geology—a deposition of silt and peat on sand and gravel, which in turn rests on boulder clay. The configuration is extremely flat, no part rising many feet above the sea level. It is essentially Rural in character, the density of the population being approximately one person to every four acres. The occupations followed are Agriculture, Fruit Growing and Horticulture.

The area of the District is 49,798 acres, and the estimated population is 11,680. There are 3,014 inhabited houses in the area and the rateable value is £25,291. A penny rate produces £115 approximately.

The House accommodation is for the most part satisfactory. The general standard of Housing can be classified as good. The dwellings are of the type occupied by an agricultural community. I am pleased to say, that while still requiring more houses, overcrowding is not now a serious problem, being less than one per cent.

There is not any system of Sewage Disposal. The houses are drained into cesspools. The House refuse is, over the greater part of the District, disposed of in the gardens of the occupiers. It is very unfortunate, that it is not as yet possible to establish a system of Scavenging such as Elm and Leverington enjoy, in all the villages in the Rural area.

A portion of the District is in possession of a good and wholesome water supply provided by the Wisbech Water Works Company from their springs at Marham. Those who do not have this supply depend upon rain water collected in tanks or undergound cisterns. If the rainfall in any season is below the average, the shortage of water in the country villages soon becomes acute. It is to be hoped that the Marham Water supply will be extended to the whole Rural District of Wisbech. This should be installed with as little delay as possible.

The Bye-laws of the Ministry of Health relating to the Housing of Fruit Pickers are in operation. The accommodation in the Wisbech Rural District is for the most part satisfactory. A systematic inspection of the Bunks is made each year, prior to occupation and during the period of occupation.

The Dairies, Cowsheds, Slaughter-houses and Knackers' Yards have all been inspected and found to be in a clean and satisfactory condition.

The Factories and Workshops were all inspected during the year and defects found remedied.

The North Cambs. Hospital, Wisbech, has fifty beds and deals with Medical and Surgical cases. The present antiquated building, used as an Isolation Hospital, is soon to be replaced with a modern building. This undertaking is long overdue. A building is reserved for the isolation of Small-Pox cases.

There has been no epidemic of Infectious Disease in the Wisbech Rural Area during the past year.

I desire to thank the Sanitary Inspector, Mr. March, for his able assistance and co-operation with me in my duties during the past year; also the Clerk to the Council, and those associated with him for their readiness to help on all occasions.

I append the following tables and statistics for 1937.

Notifiable Diseases during the past year :—

Disease.	Total Cases Notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Scarlet Fever	29	25	Nil
Diphtheria	17	17	2
Enteric Fever	0	0	0
Puerperal Fever	0	0	0
Pneumonia	7	4	8
Erysipelas	2	1	Nil
Encephalitis Lethargica ...	1	1	1

TUBERCULOSIS :—

Age Periods.	New Cases. Respiratory. M.	F.	Non-respiratory. M.	F.	Deaths. Respiratory. M.	F.	Non-respiratory. M.	F.
0—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
15—	1	—	3	—	—	—	—	—
25—	1	—	—	—	1	1	—	—
35—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
45—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
55—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
65 and upwards	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	3	1	4	1	1	1	1	1
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

CANCER :—Deaths from Cancer are less than last year. The number this year is 11—7 Males and 4 Females.

THE VITAL STATISTICS ARE AS FOLLOWS :—

		Total.		M.	F.	
Live Births	Legitimate	203	=	108	95	Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population 18·2.
	Illegitimate	10	=	7	3	
	Total Live Births	213				
Stillbirths		10	=	4	6	Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births 44·8.
Deaths		117	=	59	58	Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population 10·1.

Deaths from puerperal causes (Headings 29 and 30 of the Registrar General's Short List) :—

		Deaths.
No. 29	Puerperal sepsis ...	Nil
No. 30	Other puerperal causes	Nil

Death Rate of Infants under one year of age :—	
All Infants per 1,000 live births	56·3
Legitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate live births ...	54·1
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births ...	100·0
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	0
,, Whooping Cough (all ages)	0
,, Diarrhœa (under 2 years of age)	0

I NOW APPEND THE HOUSING STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1937.—

1. INSPECTION OF DWELLING HOUSES DURING THE YEAR.

(1) (a) Total number of dwellinghouses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ..	44
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	104
(2) (a) Number of Dwellinghouses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925	23
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	28
3) Number of dwellinghouses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	16
(4) Number of dwellinghouses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	6

2. REMEDY OF DEFECTS DURING THE YEAR WITHOUT SERVICE OF FORMAL NOTICES.

Number of defective dwellinghouses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	Nil

3. ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS DURING THE YEAR.

(a) Prodeedings under Sections 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936	1
(b) Proceedings under Public Health Acts	Nil
(c) Proceedings under Sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936.	
(1) Number of Dwellinghouses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	1
(2) Number of Dwellinghouses demolished	2
(d) Proceedings under Section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936	Nil

4. Housing Act, 1936—Overcrowding.

(a)	(i) Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year	36
	(ii) Number of families dwelling therein	36
	(iii) Number of persons dwelling therein	245
(b)	Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	7
(c)	(i) Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year	27
	(ii) Number of persons concerned in such cases	173
(d)		Nil

Inspection of Factories and Workshops.

Premises.	Inspections.	Written Notices.	Occupiers Prosecuted.
Factories (Including Factory Laundries).	6	Nil	Nil
Workshops (Including Workshop Laundries).	18	1	Nil
	24	1	Nil

Defects found in Factories and Workshops 1

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

C. H. GUNSON, M.B. and Ch.B.

(*Fellow of the Royal Institute of Public Health, London*).

Crescent House,
Wisbech.
June 15th, 1938.

Wisbech Rural District Council.

Annual Report of the Sanitary Inspector for the Year 1937.

To the Chairman and Members of the Wisbech Rural District Council.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present to you my ninth Annual Report of the Sanitary and other work carried out during the year ending 31st December, 1937.

The total number of visits made in connection with sanitary work numbered 856, the details of which are given in the table below.

It was necessary to spend a considerable amount of time on the administrative side of the Housing Act in connection with overcrowding and the proposals for the abatement thereof, the position having to be constantly reviewed and brought up-to-date prior to formulating a scheme.

In addition the supervision of the Council Houses entailed numerous visits connected with general repairs and painting of a large number.

Fortunately, very few complaints were received during the year and there was no epidemic of infectious disease; where sanitary defects were discovered, preliminary notices proved to be sufficient to have the defects remedied.

Notices Served.—11 Intimation Notices were served dealing with 11 premises. 6 Statutory Notices were served dealing with 4 premises.

Summary of Inspections.

Visits in connection with Water Supply	45
„ „ „ Drainage	41
„ „ „ Workshops including Bake-houses	24
„ „ „ Refuse Collection	204
„ „ „ Petrol & Carbide Stores ...	12
„ „ „ Fruit Pickers' Bunks ...	29
Miscellaneous Sanitary Visits	42

Housing.—Under Public Health Acts:—

Number of Houses Inspected...	11
Visits paid to above houses	32

Under Housing Acts:—

Number of Houses Inspected...	33
Visits paid to above houses	72

Under Overcrowding Survey:—

Number of Houses Inspected...	4
Visits paid to overcrowded houses	139

Infectious Diseases:—

Inquiries into cases of Infectious Diseases ...	42
Rooms disinfected	43

Meat and Food Inspections:—

Visits to Slaughterhouses and Foodshops	116
Inspections of Cowsheds and Dairies	40

Meat and Food Inspections.—During the year inspections of carcases have been carried out as frequently as possible at the time of slaughter or soon afterwards, 116 visits having been made to slaughterhouses and foodshops for this purpose, the total number of animals inspected was:—

Bovines 40, Sheep 14, Pigs 205.

As a result of these inspections, the following meat was destroyed:—

Carcase and offal of one beast (T.B.).
5 pigs' heads.

The animals slaughtered in the district are generally of a high standard, and as most of the butchers subscribe to an indemnity fund there would be no advantage gained from endeavouring to conceal diseased animals.

Slaughterhouses.—At the close of the year there were 5 registered slaughter houses in use.

Slaughter of Animals Act.—10 Licences to slaughter or stun animals were renewed, there being no cause for complaint during the year.

Milk Supply.—A number of cowkeepers in a small way of business have now ceased to produce milk for human consumption, with the result that there are now only 43 Registered Cowkeepers, situated in the following parishes:—

Elm	11	Parson Drove ...	10
Leverington ...	8	Tydd St. Giles ...	2
Newton	1	Upwell	2
Outwell	1	Wisbech St. Mary	8

Milk (Special Designations) Orders 1923 and 1936.—These Orders are administered entirely by the County Council, and a previous arrangement whereby District Sanitary Inspectors were to obtain samples of milk has now been revoked. At the close of the year there was one producer of accredited milk in the district.

WORKSHOPS.—There are 89 workshops on the Register as detailed in the following table. No serious defects were discovered during the year.

Blacksmiths	19	Saddlers...	2
Carpenters, Plumbers and Wheelwrights ...	20	Stonemason	1
Motor & Cycle Engineers	18	Rope & Cover Mnf. ...	1
Bakers	9	Boot Repairers ...	6
Cold Storage	3	Coachpainter	1
Flour Millers	5	Dressmakers	2
Pea Separating Plant ...	1	Tailor	1

PETROLEUM LICENCES.—

Licences renewed	39
New Licences granted	2
Licences lapsed	3

Quantity of petrol which may be kept in licensed stores, 25,500 gallons.

CARBIDE LICENCES.—

Licences renewed	28
Licences lapsed	8

Quantity of carbide which may be kept in licensed stores, 6 tons. 1½ cwt.

FRUIT PICKERS' BUNKS.—There were 16 fruit farms in the district which provided accommodation for about 650 fruit pickers during the soft fruit season.

The bunks are regulated by Bye-laws, and with very few exceptions, are timber structures provided specially for the purpose.

The bunks are situated as follows:—

Elm	4	Tydd St. Giles ...	3
Leverington	4	Wisbech St. Mary	3
Newton	2		

WATER SUPPLY.—No further progress of a practical nature has been made with the proposed extensions of the Wisbech Water Works Company's water mains.

HOUSING.—The following table shows the number of houses owned by the Council:—

Parish.	Situation of Site.	No. of Houses.	Scheme.	Annual Rent. £ s. d.
Elm	Wales' Bank ...	6 ...	Assisted ...	18 0 0
,, ...	,, ...	2 ...	1930 Act	13 0 0* / 11 14 0*
,, ...	Waldersea	10 ...	Assisted ...	18 0 0
,, ...	Ring's End	6 ...	1924 Act ...	15 12 0
Leverington ...	Common	4 ...	Assisted ...	18 0 0
,, ...	Cattle Dike	10 ...	,, ...	18 0 0
,, ...	Gorefield Road ...	18 ...	1924 Act ...	15 8 0*
Newton	Village	4 ...	,, ...	17 0 0
,, ...	Gooden's Lane ...	6 ...	1936 Act ...	14 8 0*
Outwell	Cotton's Head ...	10 ...	1924 Act ...	15 8 0*
Parson Drove ...	Main Road	10 ...	,, ...	18 0 0
,, ...	Sealey's Lane ...	18 ...	,, ...	15 8 0*
,, ...	Throckenholt ...	6 ...	,, ...	18 0 0
Tydd St. Giles ...	Village	16 ...	,, ...	17 0 0
Upwell	Thurland's Drove ...	10 ...	,, ...	18 0 0
,, ...	Christchurch ...	8 ...	Assisted ...	18 0 0
Wisbech St. Mary	Village	6 ...	1924 Act ...	18 0 0
,, ...	Folley's Drove ...	6 ...	,, ...	18 0 0
,, ...	Murrow Lane ...	6 ...	,, ...	18 0 0
,, ...	Murrow Lane ...	4 ...	1936 Act ...	15 8 0*
,, ...	Gull Bank	6 ...	1924 Act ...	14 8 0*
,, ...	Thorney Toll ...	6 ...	,, ...	14 8 0*
,, ...	Long Drove, Murrow	6 ...	,, ...	14 8 0*
	Total	184		

* Non-parlour type.

During the year 18 houses were erected, 2 at Elm as replacements under Demolition Orders, 6 at Leverington, 6 at Newton and 4 at Murrow Lane.

HOUSING ACT, 1936. — Overcrowding Survey. — The completion of the overcrowding survey early in the year revealed a total of 63 cases of overcrowding.

It is very difficult to give an accurate statement of the number of overcrowded houses on any particular date because of the almost impossible task for one person to keep in touch constantly with all cases, which are scattered over a wide area, and because of the fluctuations arising from removals, growth and increase of families.

The latest figures available towards the end of the year show that 36 families were still overcrowded and 18 families were borderline cases.

On these figures the proposals for rehousing were based, which were the building of 42 houses in Leverington, Parson Drove, Outwell, Upwell and Elm.

Public Scavenging.—No alterations or additions have been made to the scavenging schemes in operation in portions of Elm and Leverington.

The Contract prices for the schemes at the close of the year were :—

Leverington—	Dry refuse	...	£30 per annum.
Elm—	,,	...	£25 ,,
,,	Night-soil	...	£30 ,,

The following table gives a summary of the work carried out during the year :—

Parish.	Total No. of Visits.	Ashbins Emptd.	Pail C. Emptd.	Loads rmd.	Average Cost. per visit.	Average Cost. per load.
Leverington	6439	6439	—	65	1d.	8/1
Elm	9260	6406	2834	131	1.2d.	9/-

Public Health (Water) Act, 1878.—The usual inspections in respect of water supply to new dwellinghouses have been carried out and 35 Water Certificates granted.

Conclusion. — I again welcome the opportunity of expressing my appreciation of your Council's support during the past year, and of the assistance rendered by the various members of the staff.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

T. A. C. MARCH,

3rd June, 1938. *Sanitary Inspector.*